

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 19485 01 OF 03 181909Z

46

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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R 181827Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7551

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 03 LONDON 19485

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: READING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT -- AN EXTENDED SCANNING OF RECENT UNION ELECTIONS

REF: (A) LONDON 17822; (B) LONDON 7707; (C) LONDON 18352  
(D) LONDON 18339

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PAGE 02 LONDON 19485 01 OF 03 181909Z

SUMMARY - THE DRIFT TO THE RIGHT IN RECENT TRADE UNION

ELECTIONS CONTINUES TO MANIFEST ITSELF. IN ADDITION TO A VERY IMPORTANT VICTORY IN THE ENGINEERS UNION (REF A) THE RESULTS OF AN ELECTION IN THE ELECTRICIANS UNION WHICH HAVE JUST BEEN RELEASED CONFIRM THE TREND. BALLOTTING IS CONTINUING IN OTHER IMPORTANT UNIONS SUCH AS THE TRANSPORT WORKERS -- BRITAIN'S LARGEST SINGLE UNION -- AND IN THE BUILDING WORKERS UNION. A VARIETY OF REASONS HAVE BEEN ADVANCED FOR THIS SITUATION, INCLUDING OF COURSE THE PALE STATE OF THE ECONOMY, BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW DEEPLY ROOTED THESE SHIFTS ARE -- PARTICULARLY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE VOLATILE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ATMOSPHERE WHICH CHARACTERIZES BRITAIN TODAY. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING THE PERIOD WHEN THE MORE CELEBRATED VICTORY OF MODERATES WITHIN THE 1.4 MILLION MEMBER AMALGAMATED UNION OF ENGINEERING WORKERS (AUEW) WAS ANNOUNCED, MODERATE FORCES WITHIN THE NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS BLUNTED A STRONG DRIVE BY THE LEFT-WING TO TAKE OVER THE PRESIDENCY OF THAT 264,000 MEMBER AFFILIATE OF THE TUC. IN THE RESULT ANNOUNCED LATE LAST MONTH FROM THAT ELECTION, A NON-POLITICAL PARTY MAN, JOHN GRAY, 46, A HEADMASTER FROM CHESHIRE, DEFEATED A FIELD OF EIGHT CANDIDATES FOR THE POST OF SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT. THIS WILL ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY ENSURE HIS ELECTION TO THE UNION'S PRESIDENCY AT THE 1977 ANNUAL CONFERENCE. MOREOVER, A LABOR PARTY ACTIVIST, DEWI BONNER, ALSO A HEADMASTER -- FROM GLAMORGAN, WAS ELECTED JUNIOR VICE-PRESIDENT WHICH CONSEQUENTLY PLACES HIM IN LINE FOR THE 1978 PRESIDENCY.

2. OF COURSE, THE AUEW ELECTION WAS CLEARLY THE MOST IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY SINCE MODERATES NOW HOLD THE BALANCE OF POWER (4 TO 3 IN THEIR FAVOR) AND WILL INCREASE THEIR MARGIN TO A COMFORTABLE LEAD (5 TO 2) WHEN ONE OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS-ELECT TAKES HIS SEAT NEXT SEPTEMBER. THE AUEW SITUATION MARKS A CONTINUATION OF THE MODERATE ADVANCE IN THAT UNION WHICH WAS UNDERLINED BY THE EARLIER VICTORY OF JOHN BOYD IN HIS DRIVE FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THAT UNION (REF B). MOREOVER, AS IF TO UNDERSCORE THESE DEVELOPMENTS, THE UNION'S 52 MAN POLICY COMMITTEE RECENTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LONDON 19485 01 OF 03 181909Z

VOTED BY A SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY TO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT'S 6 POUND WAGE RESTRAINT POLICY, THUS OVERTURNING A POLICY DECISION OF THE UNION.

3. IN A TALLY RESULT ANNOUNCED THIS PAST MONDAY (DECEMBER 15), FRANK CHAPPLE'S 414,000 MEMBER ELECTRICAL, ELECTRONICS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND PLUMBING UNION (EPPTU) DECISIVELY WITHSTOOD A THREAT FROM THE LEFT FOR

SEATS ON UNIOI'S EXECUTIVE. SIX SEATS -- OF THE UNION'S  
14 MAN EXECUTIVE -- WERE BEING CONTESTED AND MODERATES  
WON FIVE OF THESE WITH LARGE MAJORITIES, THUS ENSURING  
THAT FRANK CHAPPLE, AN OUTSPOKEN ANTI-COMMUNIST ON THE  
TUC'S GENERAL COUNCIL, WILL MAINTAIN STRONG CONTROL OVER  
THAT UNION. (THE RIGHT-WING MAJORITY ON THE EXECUTIVE  
IS NOW 8 TO 4, WITH TWO VACANCIES.)

4. THERE ARE OTHER MORE COMPLEX ELECTIONS TAKING PLACE  
IN OTHER UNIOIS, NOTABLY THE TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WOR-  
KERS UNION (TGWU), WITH 1.8 MILLION MEMBERS -- THE COUN-  
TRY'S LARGEST. THESE ELECTIONS, WHOSE RESULTS SHOULD BE  
AVAILABLE AT HEADQUARTERS TOWARD THE END OF THIS MONTH,

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PAGE 01 LONDON 19485 02 OF 03 181848Z

46

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 03 LONDON 19485

ARE BEING CONDUCTED RATHER QUIETLY AND UNOBTRUSIVELY AND  
JUDGING FROM OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH AN OFFICIAL OF THE  
UNION ARE BEING DOWNPLAYED. THEY INVOLVE NOT ONLY THE  
SEATS ON THE 39 MEMBER EXECUTIVE OF THE UNION, BUT ALSO  
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PAGE 02 LONDON 19485 02 OF 03 181848Z

A VARIETY OF REGIONAL AND INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEES. THE  
PRESENT EXECUTIVE IS BELIEVED TO BE LARGELY LEFT OF CENTER,  
WITH ABOUT EIGHT ON THE EXTREME LEFT -- PERHAPS  
HALF OF WHOM ARE COMMUNISTS. HOWEVER, AS LORELIES OLS-  
LAGER, WRITING IN THE "FINANCIAL TIMES" (DECEMBER 1,  
1975) PUTS IT: "THE INSTITUTIONALIZED POWER OF THE GENERAL  
SECRETARY (JACK JONES) HIS TRADITIONAL IDENTIFICATION  
WITH LEFT OF CENTER POLICIES AND HIS CONTINUING CONTACT  
WITH THE GRASS ROOTS HAVE ENABLED MR. JONES SO FAR  
TO WIN SOLID MAJORITY SUPPORT FOR ALMOST ALL HIS POLI-  
CIES." THESE ELECTIONS SHOULD REFLECT WHETHER THE UNION  
RANK AND FILE SUPPORT THE MODERATE DOMESTIC POLICIES OF  
THE TGWU LEADERSHIP.

5. ANOTHER SERIES OF IMPORTANT ELECTIONS, IN THE 258,000  
MEMBER UNION OF CONSTRUCTION AND ALLIED TRADES AND TECH-  
NICIANS (UCATT) IS AT BRANCH LEVEL FOR MEMBERS OF THE  
15-MAN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE UNION. THESE ELECTIONS  
WHICH BEGAN ON DECEMBER 1ST ARE THE FIRST FOR A FULL  
COUNCIL SINCE THE MERGER IN 1971 OF SEVERAL UNIONS WHICH  
MAKE UP THE UAATT. JOHN ELLIOTT, LABOR EDITOR OF THE  
"FINANCIAL TIMES" ESTIMATES THAT THERE ARE NOW FIVE LEFT-  
WINGERS ON THE COUNCIL, WHICH HE DEFINES EITHER AS COM-  
MUNIST PARTY MEMBERS OR AS MEN EXPECTED TO GATHER PARTY  
OR LEFTIST SUPPORT. (IT WOULD BE INCORRECT TO SAY THAT  
ALL MILITANTS ARE LEFT-WINGERS; AN IMPORTANT MILITANT,  
IN A SENSE THAT HE IS A HARD FIGHTER ON TRADE UNION IS-  
SUES, IS THE STAUNCHLY ANTI-COMMUNIST CHAPPEL. CONVER-  
SELY, FOR TACTICAL REASONS SOME COMMUNISTS MAY FOLLOW  
A FAR FROM MILITANT POSITION IN THEIR UNIONS.) ACCORDING  
TO ELLIOTT, THE LEFT IS MAKING A DETERMINED EFFORT TO IN-  
CREASE ITS STRENGTH ON THE COUNCIL AND IS FIELDING CAN-  
DIDATES IN EVERY DISTRICT OF THE UNION.

7. COMMENT: THUS FAR, THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE BEGINNING OF A TREND TOWARD MODERATION IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IS EVIDENT. VARIOUS REASONS HAVE BEEN ATTRIBUTED FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE MODERATES. SOME SUGGEST THAT IT IS DUE TO THE POSTAL BALLOT COUPLED WITH INTENSE MEDIA INTEREST IN AT LEAST TWO OF THE UNION ELECTIONS -- IN THE AUEW AND THE EFTU. THERE ARE THOSE WHO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LONDON 19485 02 OF 03 181848Z

BELIEVE IT IS A REFLECTION OF A DEEPER SENSE OF SOBRIETY IN THE COUNTRY AS RESULT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE CONSEQUENT THREAT OR ACTUAL EFFECT OF UNEMPLOYMENT. OTHERS BELIEVE THAT THE LEFT-RIGHT SWINGS IN BOTH THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND THE LABOR PARTY (REF C) ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE CHARACTER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN POWER, I.E., UNIONS TEND TO MOVE TO THE LEFT WHEN THE CONSERVATIVES ARE IN POWER AND TOWARD THE CENTER WHEN LABOR WINS. MANY OBSERVERS CREDIT A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL -- JACK JONES, THE TUC'S "MR. BIG," -- WITH BEING A MAJOR INFLUENCE IN MOVING THE TUC LEADERSHIP BEHIND MODERATE DOMESTIC POLICIES DURING THE PAST YEAR OR MORE.

8. IT MAY BE SIMPLISTIC BUT NONETHELESS REASONABLE TO ASSERT THAT ALL OF THESE REASONS CONTRIBUTED TO THE RESURGENCE OF MODERATION -- ALTHOUGH WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE MOST SOBERING DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN THE ECONOMIC CRISIS. THE NEW MOOD IS CERTAINLY REFLECTED IN THE REVERSAL OF COMMUNIST PARTY FORTUNES DURING THE PAST YEAR. THE PARTY HAS LOST ABOUT 1,400 MEMBERS OUT OF 30,000 SINCE THE LAST PARTY CONGRESS (REF D), DUES PAYMENTS HAVE DROPPED AND THE PARTY ORGAN, "THE MORNING STAR" HAS DECLINED IN CIRCULATION.

9. IT WOULD BE FOOLHARDY IN THE EXTREME TO SUPPOSE THAT THE COMMUNIST PARTY, DESPITE ITS RECENT SETBACKS, IS READY TO CLOSE ITS KING STREET DOORS AND GIVE UP ON ITS EFFORTS TO BE A FORCE IN THE POLICY OF THE TRADE UNIONS. TODAY, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS IT HAS A REPRESENTATIVE ON THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL (KEN GILL); IT STILL HAS REPRESENTATION -- SOMETIMES SUBSTANTIAL -- ON A NUMBER OF EXECUTIVES OF THE THIRTEEN MOST POWERFUL UNIONS IN THE TUC; IT STILL HAS WIDESPREAD REPRESENTATION AT REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL IN KEY INDUSTRIES SUCH AS THE AUTO INDUSTRY, SHIPBUILDING, DOCKS AND MINES -- REPRESENTATION WELL OUT OF PROPORTION TO ACTUAL TRADE UNION MEMBERS OF THE PARTY, EVEN IF YOU ADD SYMPATHIZERS FROM OTHER PARTIES, TOM JACKSON, THE POST OFFICE WORKERS UNION LEADER BELIEVES -- AS HE TOLD US RECENTLY -- THAT

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PAGE 04 LONDON 19485 02 OF 03 181848Z

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PAGE 01 LONDON 19485 03 OF 03 181844Z

46

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 03 OF 03 LONDON 19485

THE GREATER THREAT FROM THE LEFT ACTUALLY IS CENTERED IN A VARIETY OF TROTSKYITE GROUPS SUCH AS THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY AND THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS WHO HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY ACTIVE IN THE WHITE COLLAR, TECH-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 LONDON 19485 03 OF 03 181844Z

NICAL PROFESSIONAL AND MANAGERIAL FIELDS AND WHO TEND TO BE "INTELLECTUAL-ORIENTED" WITH STRONG TIES TO THE UNIVERSITIES.

10. MOREOVER, EXTREME LEFT-WING GROUPS STILL HAVE AN UNDERLYING CONGENIAL ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH TO WORK. DEEP CLASS DIVISIONS STILL EXIST WITHIN BRITISH SOCIETY; THERE STILL EXIST SERIOUS PRACTICAL LIMITS ON HIGHER EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN THE UK; THERE ARE STILL SERIOUS POVERTY AREAS WITHIN THE COUNTRY; THERE STILL EXIST WIDESPREAD AREAS OF MANAGEMENT WHICH HAVE FAILED TO DEAL IN MODERN TERMS WITH THE PEOPLE AND PRODUCTS THEY MANAGE; AND THERE STILL DOES NOT EXIST IN BRITAIN A SYSTEM OF ORDERLY GROUND RULES OR A UNION STRUCTURE TO COPE EFFECTIVELY WITH MODERN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM AND TO TACKLE THE BASIC TASK OF RAISING PRODUCTIVITY. MOREOVER, THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IS BY NO MEANS OVER. THINGS WILL GET WORSE BEFORE THEY GET BETTER, E.G., UNEMPLOYMENT WILL INCREASE AND THE LEFT-WING, WHICH HAS STRONGLY OPPOSED THE ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT -- SUPPORTED BY THE TUC -- IS WAITING TO SHOUT FROM THE HOUSETOPS: "I TOLD YOU SO."

11. BUT FOR THE MOMENT, A BASIC TRUTH IS RE-EMERGING IN THE WAKE OF ELECTORAL BATTLES WITHIN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. THE MASS OF THE BRITISH RANK AND FILE REMAINS ESSENTIALLY MODERATE IN OUTLOOK AND BEHAVIOR. AS CHAPPLE, A FORMER COMMUNIST HIMSELF, SAYS: "THE BRITISH WORKER IS NO MILITANT." HE OUGHT TO KNOW AND, IN ANY CASE, THIQ AXIOM SEEMS TO BE PROVING ITSELF.

RICHARDSON

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